

The Basevi family were then and later not devoid of intellectual distinction, but no portion of it seems to have fallen to the lot of Maria D'Israel. She lived till 1847 — long enough to see her son one of the foremost men in Parliament; yet in the family correspondence we seldom hear of her, or if she is mentioned it is usually in connexion with some passing illness or some domestic detail. In the Memoir of Isaac D'Israeli, which his son contributed to a collected edition of his works^ published after his death, and which forms the basis of this and the preceding chapter, she finds no place at all. Her daughter, writing on its appearance to congratulate her brother on 'the success of his labour of love' and writing with a sister's admiring partiality, was nevertheless quick to notice the omission.

Your essay must ever rank among the most delightful biographic sketches in our language, if not the most so, and I can at this moment remember nothing like it. Never was there a character at once so skilfully, tenderly, and truthfully delineated. Every line told in my heart as I eagerly ran over them. As for the whole, no one but ourselves can know how true it is, but everybody will feel how charming. Only your magic pen could have so grouped materials which seemed so scant into a picture full of interest for all the world. If it be short, it is full of matter. Every thing is in it — everything at least but one. I do wish that one felicitous stroke, one tender word had brought our dear Mother into the picture. You will think me ungrateful not 'to be quite satisfied. It is easy for one who can do nothing else to make remarks.

Maria D'Israeli in fact

appears to have been an excellent wife and mother, who kept the affection of her husband and won the affection of her children, but never counted for much in the intellectual life of either.

For Isaac D'Israeli the ten years that followed his marriage were years mainly of accumulation. ' His pen was never idle, but it was to note and to register, not to compose. His researches were prosecuted every morning among the MSS. of the British Museum, while his own ample collections permitted him to pursue his investiga-